



Welfare Regimes


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Social Policy Triangle

1. The meeting of people's welfare needs
2. the smooth working of the capitalist economy
3. The helping, or obliging, of people to take responsibility for their own and their family's wellbeing


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Models of Social Policy

- Minimalist : United States of America
- Integrationist: Germany and France
- social democratic models: Scandinavian countries
- Radical Approach


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The minimalist state

- The minimalist approach has its roots in the political philosophy of libertarianism
- ✓ Greatest social value was individual freedom
- ✓ The state should intervene in social and economic life only when absolutely necessary to safeguard the liberties of individuals
- ✓ The state's approach is non-interventionist, *laissez faire*, 'let it be'.
- ✓ In order to protect the liberties of the law-abiding majority, and to enforce socially responsible behaviour, it stamps down hard on transgressors. The catchphrase is 'small state, strong state'.


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The minimalist state

- Welfare needs are best met in exactly the same way, not by the state but by individuals and families, who are responsible for their own welfare, and by businesses (e.g. private health care, private schools, private pensions).?
- The main way of obtaining welfare services is to buy them, and the state will have very minimal, basic services for those who cannot afford to do so.
- Esping-Andersen (1990) calls this a 'liberal' or 'neo-liberal' approach.

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Social Welfare in Minimalist State

- Although families, businesses and charities are the main sources of welfare support and services
- the state provides a safety net – very basic services, the minimum to meet essential needs, but not so generous or comfortable that they undermine individual responsibility or mean that taxes have to rise too high.
- There might be some basic financial welfare benefits, but they will be only a very modest amount of money, and will involve stringent eligibility criteria to distinguish between the genuinely needy and the 'undeserving'
- Decisions about entitlement would also involve means-testing to assess the level of income and savings held by a claimant. They would be required to use them up first, before they are eligible for state assistance.

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Social Welfare in Integrationist State

- In this model, the state has a significant but limited role in the delivery of welfare services.
- It cooperates with the private and voluntary sectors, and tends to take a planning, coordinating and funding role rather than the direct provision of services.
- The mixed economy of welfare is characteristic of the integrationist model.
- So, when social problems like poverty, poor health or educational drop-out are identified, they may be analysed as the results of services not being delivered effectively to the neediest people.
- Accordingly, there is an emphasis on targeting services more.


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Social Welfare in Integrationist State

- Under the integrationist model, welfare benefits would be insurance based, so that those who have better-paid jobs would pay in more, but then receive higher benefits when they need them
- In terms of the social policy triangle, the emphasis in the integrationist model falls on the economy. The state cooperates with businesses to provide opportunities for them to supply welfare services, and make a profit out of it.
- Public-private partnerships and private finance initiatives are emblematic of this approach.


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- Poor are moral under class
- Capitalism and individual liberty are prized social value
- deserving poor – for example, people who are victims of unforeseeable accidents –should be encouraged to 'stand on their own two feet', to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps'.
- The emphasis falls on individual and family responsibility.


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The integrationist state

- approach sees a greater role for the state in social and economic life.
- The primary value now is not liberty, but rather social stability and cohesion.
- This approach has its roots in the philosophical tradition of utilitarianism – the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
- Esping-Andersen (1990) calls this approach 'conservative corporatist', which conveys the sense of the state working with businesses and charities (corporatism) to maintain current social and economic structures (conservatism)

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The integrationist state

- Titmuss (1974: 31) labels it the 'industrial achievement-performance' model, and sees it as 'the handmaiden of the economy'.
- while seeking to assist individuals in need, it also aims to preserve the differentials between those who perform well in the economy and those who do not.
- Hardiker *et al.* (1991) use the term 'institutional' for this model, capturing the way that welfare is bedded into the structures and functioning of society, through state, private and voluntary agencies, and through legislation, policies and established practices.


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The social democratic state

- The key value for the social democratic welfare state is equality, with its roots in the philosophical traditions of egalitarianism and moderate forms of socialism.
- It sees an active role for the state in ensuring that all citizens receive high-quality welfare services.
- Welfare is at the heart of the state's role in society, and the objective is to raise the quality of life for all citizens, not just the obviously needy.
- State-run services are not seen as a residual, safety net provision for inadequate people, but as services for all, promoting equality and offering high standards.

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The social democratic state

- When social problems do arise, these are understood not primarily as personal failings or welfare system failings, but resulting from wider inequalities of power and resources.
- the state will use taxation to redistribute wealth and create opportunities, by funding high-quality welfare services and fully sufficient benefits.
- Titmuss (1974) refers to this approach as the 'institutional redistributive' model, Esping-Andersen (1990) calls it 'social democratic', and Hardiker *et al.* (1991) use the term 'developmental'. Levitas (1998) describes a 'redistributionist discourse' (RED), which captures the features of this model.


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Social Welfare in Social Democratic State

- The state provides welfare services not just for the needy few but for all citizens.
- The state can play a positive role in ensuring welfare – and by providing high-quality services for all, it creates employment and ensures a healthy and well-educated workforce.
- This enables people to take responsibility for themselves, but they also share a sense of social responsibility for the wellbeing of their fellow citizens.


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The radical perspective

- It takes a critical view of the state and capitalism
- It looks, ultimately, for the ending of capitalism and the transformation of society, with power and resources in the hands of working people, an end to privilege and individualism.
- This approach has its roots in Marxism.
- It is mistrustful of the state, arguing that even the social democratic model serves the interests of capitalism more than the interests of workers.

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Welfare System in Radical State

- For the radicals, social problems are not the result of individual choices or moral weaknesses, but of deep-seated, structural divisions in society – class, race, gender, age and disability are the main examples.
- Welfare services, as they currently operate, do little if anything to redress these imbalances: indeed, they may even reinforce them, because of the tendency for the middle classes to take better advantage of social services, both as recipients and as employees.

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The challenges of social policy

- Reality is a complex mixture of the approaches, with overlaps and tensions between them.
- Even within political parties there is a range of opinions, and individuals too are likely to have a mixture of beliefs, not always consistent.

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